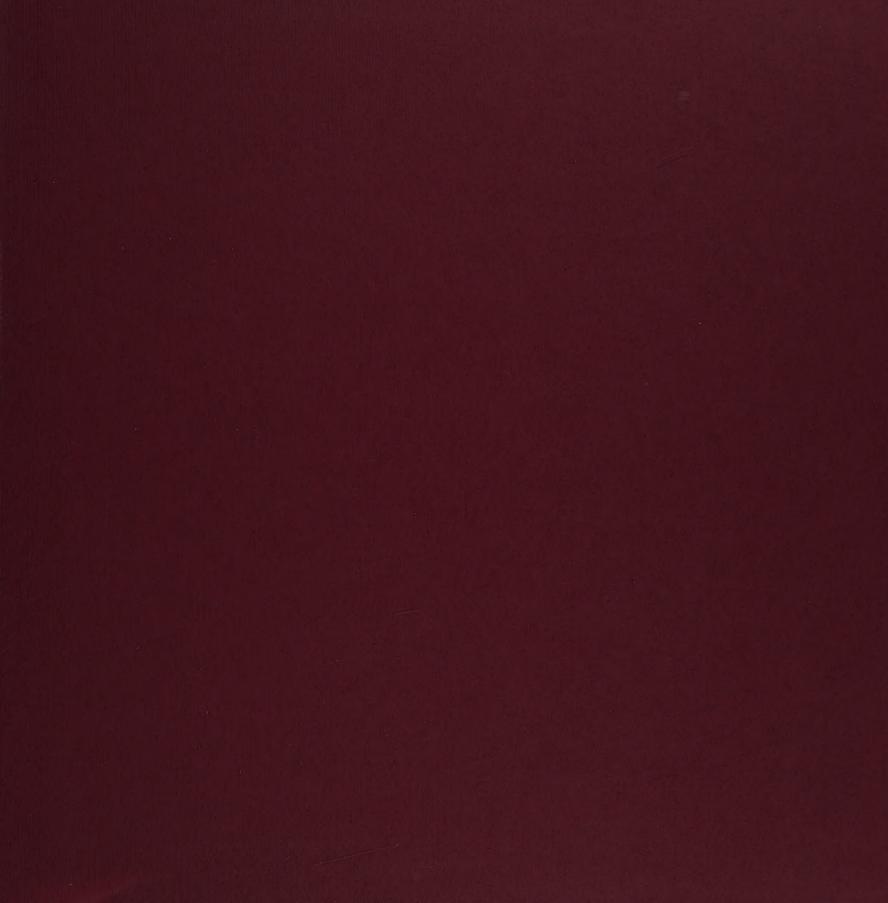
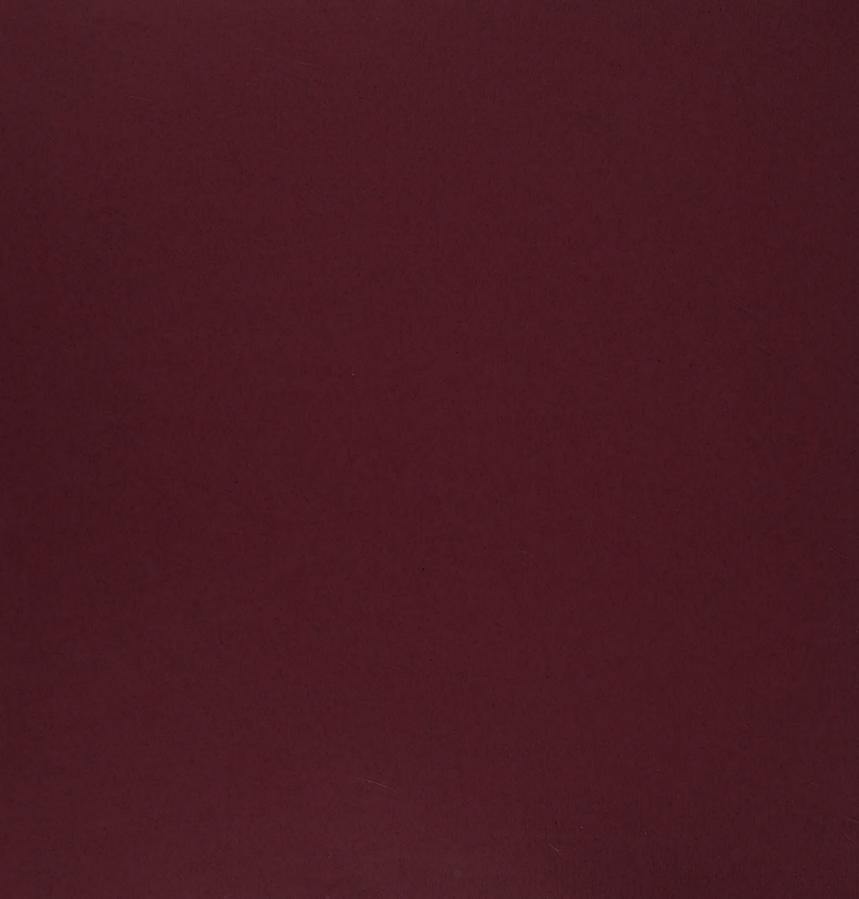


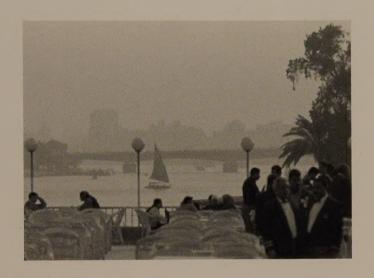
PARIS ALONG THE NILE

Cairo, 'Mother of the World': its vividly diverse neighborhoods and building styles reveal its cosmopolitan energy and reflect the myriad of economic, political, and cultural forces that have shaped the city over the centuries. So impressed was Khedive Ismail after a visit to Haussmann's 'new' Paris in 1867 that he decided to build a modern city along the same architectural lines and aesthetics, and brought European architects to Cairo to initiate Egypt's most dynamic building period since medieval times. The stunning buildings of the late nineteenthand early twentieth-century Cairo remain, but they are neglected, threatened by pollution, and are being pulled down for concrete highrises and parking lots. Paris along the Nile captures in 170 black-and-white photographs the architectural jewels of 'modern' Cairo, but goes far beyond a mundane documentation of the buildings. The book combines architectural and street photography to produce a compelling portrait of the old and the new. Each photograph is accompanied by a caption that gives the neighborhood and street address, and, where known, the architect, date of construction, and residents of the building.





Paris along the Nile





PARIS ALONG THE NILE

Architecture in Cairo from the Belle Epoque

CYNTHIA MYNTTI

The American University in Cairo Press

For Bert

This project was made possible by generous sponsorship from Shell Egypt

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Introduction



Heliopolis 7 Salah al-Din (also Rafiq) Street

There was a time, not long ago, when Europeans and Americans came to sunny and glamorous Cairo to escape their dreary northern cities. Cairo: where electric trams needled tree-lined boulevards linking splendid mansions, hotels, arcades, bright-lit theatres, and pleasure parks. Cairo: whose silky cotton and its economy attracted merchants, speculators, artisans, adventurers, and landless Italian peasants to build a new city. It was a time when the corner grocer was Greek, the mechanic Italian, the confectioner Austrian, the pharmacist English, the hotelier Swiss, and the department store owner Jewish. In Cairo's headiest days the wealthy of many nations danced at dinner parties in flamboyant villas, and bet on horse races at exclusive sporting clubs.

I fell in love at first sight with this cosmopolitan Cairo more than twenty-five years ago and love it still even after living there for nearly a decade. A most extraordinary metropolis: from the great pyramids at Giza in the west to the Citadel built by Saladin in the east, there along the Nile lies a city of incredible history, layered like an onion, densely populated, yet traversable almost entirely on foot. One moves successively from old Coptic Cairo, on to the lanes, bazaars, mosques and cemeteries of medieval Islamic Cairo, the circuit completed in the stylish fin-desiècle districts that could easily pass for Paris.

Time, alas, has been unkind to Cairo. At the turn of the century the city's population was about 600,000; it now exceeds 13 million. An inadequate and decrepit infrastructure, a rising salt-laden water table, earthquakes, traffic-clogged streets and seriously polluted air have all contributed to urban decay. Rising land prices and an antiquated system of rent controls lead to active disinvestment in older buildings whose tenants appear never to leave. These days it makes more economic sense to let a charming old building collapse and build in its place a

formless office block or parking garage.

One of Cairo's remaining oases is the garden behind the ornate palace refitted for Empress Eugénie at the formal opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. That place of ease is now part of the Cairo Marriott Hotel. Some time ago I joined a friend there for tea and we lamented the sorry state of so many of Cairo's colonial-era buildings—some noble, some whimsical. Out of that conversation grew the idea for this book. I am an anthropologist, not a photographer, so I first thought I would create a photographic essay by collaborating with a professional photographer. But as I developed the book in my mind, it became clear that it had to be my eye behind the camera lens. So I boned up on photographic technique, secured funding, and arrived in Cairo in early 1997 with two Nikon 35mm cameras, several lenses, and 120 rolls of film.

The photographs that compose this book are not, technically speaking, documentary. I have not systematically covered one particular building type, architectural style, era, or neighborhood. Instead, I simply took pictures of what I liked, what struck me as charming, grand, or amusing: from street corners and full buildings to their decorative details. The oldest buildings I photographed date from about 1870, the now run-down classic arcades of Clot Bey Street, while the newest buildings are from the 1930s, those audacious mixtures of baroque, art deco, and expressionism with a few sphinxes thrown in for local flavor. Readers will find photographs of favorite and well-known landmarks in downtown Cairo, which is that area from the old Bab al-Hadid rail station (now called Ramsis) to Ataba, Opera, and Abdin Squares, and west to the Nile at Midan Tahrir, as well as familiar locations in Garden City and Zamalek. They may, however, be surprised at the unexpected grace and elegance of buildings in less well-known streets of

Heliopolis, Abbasiya, al-Daher, Bulaq, and Munira. A map at the end of the book locates these districts in relation to old Cairo and the Nile for those readers not familiar with the city.

I spent two months in the streets taking pictures, and talking with people as I went about my work. Initially many bystanders were suspicious. Was I photographing the ugly, trying to show Egypt in a bad light? When I explained in Arabic that I wished to photograph those beautiful old buildings their faces changed. "Welcome in Egypt!" "May I be of service?" School children helped me figure the best light. Old men showed me their favorite buildings. Porters opened gates and doors. Women invited me in for tea, even when they themselves were observing the Ramadan fast. So, the photographs in one sense come out of those conversations in the streets. I hope they convey a bit of what I felt: awesome beauty, amusing fancy, depressing decay, and the irrepressible warmth and humor of the people who live there.

In the text, map, and captions I have not followed any one system of transliteration for words into English, but use instead common and easily recognized spellings. Where a street or square has more than one name, I have generally used the most common referent and put the other names in brackets when the building first appears in the sequence of photographs.

Many people contributed to this project, and I owe them much. Mr. Tarek Heggy, then Chairman of Shell Egypt, and Ms. Hala Loutfi currently of Shell Egypt gave me the necessary financial support to undertake the project. In Cairo and Alexandria a number of people offered generous advice, information, and moral support: Muhammad Awad, Carla Burri, Christina Davies, Enrico d'Errico, Leila Fadel, Jocelyn de Jong, Paul Gedait, Barbara Lethem Ibrahim, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Dalila Kerdani, Amira

Khattab, Bernard O'Kane, Seif el-Rashidi, Randa Shaath, Seteney Shami, Nihal Tamraz, and Liz Taylor. A special thanks to Karima Khalil, Samir Raafat, Max Rodenbeck, and Mercedes Volait, who gave me hours of their time to identify buildings and to note their history. I was fortunate to be in Cairo in early 1997 for the colloquium "Un siècle d'architecture savante en Egypte (1885-1950)," organized by M. Ali Hassan, then Director of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, Professor Carla Burri, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Cairo, and Professor Mercedes Volait of CNRS in France; many of the useful observations made at that meeting have been incorporated here. I also had assistance in other parts of the world from Rasha al-Amir, Ellen Benavides, Nina Dodge, Norbert Hirschhorn, Paulette Mitchell, Abdallah Noman, Katherine Turczan, Shelagh Weir, and Dick Wilson, and I thank them all. I would also like to acknowledge Steve Rifkin and his colleagues Andy, Brad, Joe, and Mark who transformed my film into fine prints in their Minneapolis lab, and Roger Davies for his wonderfully creative book design. Lastly, I owe a big thanks to an unnamed Cairo taxi driver, who turned up the following morning with the grant check I had left in a folder on the back seat of his cab.



Garden City Fuad Sirag al-Din Palace, corner of Nabatat and Ahmad Pasha streets. Built in 1908 by Carlo Prampolini. Occupants have included the German Legation prior to World War I, Charles Beyerle of Credit Foncier Egyptien, a Swedish girls' school, and the Sirag al-Din family

Cairo: The cosmopolitan years



Garden City Comiche al-Nil at Gamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin

... the Khedive had built a handsome Opera House in Cairo, and had offered the composer Verdi a munificent sum for an opera which should represent the glories of old Egypt. The result was that finest production of the modern Italian school, Aida, whose representation here on a scale of great magnificence, with Madame Parepa Rosa in the title role, is one of my most treasured memories of a winter on the Nile.

John L. Stoddard's Lectures 1897

Ezbekiyeh Garden. The fine gardens, which have several entrances (adm. 5 mill.) were laid out in 1870 by M. Barillet, formerly chief gardener to the city of Paris. . . . An Egyptian band, which generally performs European music, plays here daily from 3 to about 5 p.m.; and a British military band plays on two evenings a week in summer. The gardens afford a delightful promenade at all periods of the day, and they present a very attractive appearance by gas-light; but invalids should be careful to leave them before sundown, after which the air here is very damp.

Cafes in the European style abound in and near the Ezbekiyeh. Beer and other beverages are obtained at these establishments. None of them are suitable for ladies.

Baedeker's Egypt and the Sudan: Handbook for Travellers 1908

Egyptians had had two thousand years of foreign occupation, reflected now as then in the emotive wealth of the landscape, in which everything happens at once–Greek temples, and Roman forts and the mosques of the Mamlukes and eventually the great cosmopolitan jumble of Cairo. With the unimaginable reach of the pharaonic centuries beyond.

We were a part of the tail-end of that occupation.

Penelope Lively Oleander, Jacaranda: A Childhood Perceived 1994

The history of any place is often a story of competition, with greater and lesser powers struggling for advantage over time. Such is how we must understand the history of modern Egypt and in it, the city of Cairo. Modern Cairo's 'plot' involved Egypt's landed gentry,

industrialists, technocrats, and urban elites, but also the Turks, French, British of course, Belgians, Austrians, Greeks, Americans, Armenians, Italians, Jews from Vienna, Livorno, and Izmir, and Arabs from the Ottoman province of Syria.

Egypt's strategic location on the south shore of the Mediterranean, on the northeast edge of Africa, at the margin of the Arab Middle East, and straddling the Red Sea route to Asia has attracted attention since antiquity. This pivotal position has also afforded Egypt its multiple identities, exploited and manipulated by its leaders from earliest times. Egypt is indeed part of the Mediterranean world so fully described by Braudel; Europeans are kin. But so are Arabs, Muslims, Africans, and other once-colonized peoples.

From the early nineteenth century, European powers vied ruthlessly to gain the necessary favor (and sometimes control) to keep Egypt an open market and an unimpeded throughway to their colonies in Africa and Asia. Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt in 1798 with armies of soldiers and scholars hoping to make it a French colony. He lost his fleet to England and the French stayed just three years—enough, however, to rediscover ancient Egypt for the delectation of Europeans. Muhammad Ali, the Albanian mercenary with the Ottoman army, rose to rule in Egypt in the subsequent turmoil and sought to make Egypt a modern state. He actively courted the Europeans, giving away pharaonic treasures to Paris and London, negotiating first with one power, next with another.

Of all of Muhammad Ali's descendants and political heirs, it was his grandson Ismail who defined Cairo in the modern period. Khedive Ismail ruled Egypt from 1863 to 1879. His predecessors had licensed Britain to build a modern railway system in Egypt, linking Cairo with the Mediterranean port of Alexandria and the Red Sea town of

Suez. Ferdinand de Lesseps and the French got the concession to build the Suez Canal, on terms, it should be added, highly unfavorable to Egypt.

Almost immediately on accession Ismail was caught up in the heady economic business of having a raw material that the world wanted: cotton. Britain needed an adequate supply of long staple cotton for the textile factories of Manchester and Leeds. When the American Civil War led to an embargo on cotton exports from the Confederacy, Britain looked even more anxiously to Egypt for that raw material. Egyptian revenues from cotton rose dramatically, nourishing the khedive's ambitions for grand public works: canals, land reclamation, urban structures, and infrastructure.

A seminal event in Khedive Ismail's reign was his visit to Paris in 1867. He had traveled in Europe earlier and had been a student in Paris, but this time he was a special guest of Emperor Napoleon III for Paris's Exposition Universelle. World fairs of this type were a regular feature in European capitals and American cities of the nineteenth century, and for the Paris Exposition of 1867 Egypt itself went to great lengths to create a spectacular national exhibit. The Egyptian pavilion stirred considerable interest among the fair's eleven million visitors as it included what Europeans fancied Egypt to be: a pharaonic temple, an oriental bazaar, a Bedouin tent. Of course the major attraction of the Exposition was the city of Paris itself, newly planned with wide boulevards, formal gardens, grand department stores and covered shopping arcades, and a complex sewerage system. Baron Haussmann, the Prefect of the Seine, personally received and entertained the khedive and his entourage, proudly showing them the new Paris that he had created.

Khedive Ismail hungered to be civilized in the European fashion. He knew that he must do for Cairo what

Haussmann did for Paris. But rather than simply pull down old districts as Haussmann did, Ismail decided to build an entirely new city just west of the old one as land reclamation made it possible to build ever closer to the Nile. The khedive hired more European technicians and appointed the French-educated Ali Mubarak Minister of Public Works to oversee the construction of a new quarter called Ismailiya; they were also to redevelop older and vacant lands near Azbakiya, and to draw up a master plan for the entire city to rival Paris.

Khedive Ismail then decided to host his own world fair to mark the opening of the Suez Canal. He had a scant two years in which to transform Cairo. Paved streets and sidewalks were laid out. Land was subdivided for villas and apartment houses. Barillet-Deschamps, who designed the Bois de Boulogne and the Champs de Mars in Paris, was invited together with the French horticulturist Delchevalerie to create a typical French pleasure garden at Azbakiya. When fully developed the garden contained a large collection of exotic trees and plants, a small lake with pedal boats and bridges, European and oriental tea rooms and restaurants, a photographic studio, a Chinese pavilion, a fencing school, a theatre, and shops. Nearby, the khedive commissioned the building of the Theatre National de Comedie and an Opera House on the model of La Scala of Milan. On Gezira, the island in the Nile nearest the new Cairo, Ismail took the palace being built for himself (now the Cairo Marriott Hotel) and refurbished it with the best of French appointments to house the Empress Eugénie, his most distinguished guest at the ceremonies opening the Suez Canal.

During his 'Exposition' Khedive Ismail delighted his guests with a visit to the Giza pyramids, and they traveled with ease on an elevated road adorned with shade trees. He had commissioned Giuseppe Verdi and the famous

French Egyptologist Jean-François Champollion to create Aida, that paean to the glory of Egypt, for the inauguration of the Opera House. But then the costumes arrived too late and so the morbid Rigoletto set in Mantua was performed in its place. Some observers commented that the sophisticated Europeans were expecting Oriental splendors of the Arabian Nights but were led, in their carefully choreographed visits, to a simulacrum of Paris instead.

Soon Cairo was recognized as a delightful city whose amenities surpassed many of those in Europe and America. Ali Mubarak's master plan for the new western part of the city created wide streets and squares similar to Haussmann's Paris. Clot Bey Street, named after Dr. Antoine Clot, Napoleon's physician and founder of Egypt's first medical school, linked the new Cairo train station at Bab al-Hadid to the main commercial square, al-Ataba al-Khadra. Ataba eventually contained Cairo's post office, fire station, several elegant hotels, arcaded commercial buildings, and the city's central food market. When trams were introduced, Ataba Square became the hub of Cairo's modern public transportation system. Ataba backed onto the Azbakiya gardens and Opera Square, and was linked by a grand boulevard southward to the khedive's main palace at Abdin. Westward and northward, streets were laid out arrow-straight to accommodate new commercial and residential buildings.

The cotton boom of the 1860s was short lived. Khedive Ismail's Egypt became mired in hopeless debt, and the cost to maintain and further develop the luxurious city exceede'd revenues. Napoleon III and Haussmann had also created a huge debt to build the modern Paris, but despite economic downturns their French creditors considered the debt a capital investment in the city. Egypt's European creditors were not so generous, and demanded full and timely payments. To pay up, Egypt was eventually forced

to borrow against its shares of the Suez Canal. In an audacious move, Britain's prime minister Disraeli purchased all of Egypt's shares, thus committing Britain to protracted involvement in the convoluted affairs of Egypt.

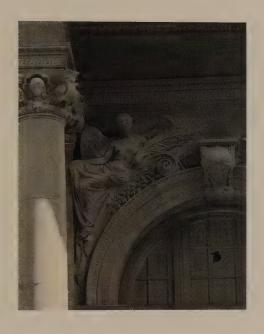
To protect their investments, the British occupied Egypt in 1882 and ruled the nation virtually as a colony. It was an unusual arrangement. Egypt was still considered part of the Ottoman empire, had its own hereditary rulers descended from Muhammad Ali, and yet the country was actually run by Europeans.

In the meanwhile, the cotton markets recovered and Cairo grew much as Khedive Ismail and his minister Ali Mubarak had planned. An essentially European city grew up between Ataba Square and the Nile, and the new Egyptian middle class spread northward to Faggala and Abbasiya. In the European district rising demand for commercial, financial, consular, and residential quarters led to an increasing density of building and soon villas and gardens were replaced by multistoried Parisian-styled commercial and residential buildings. Here residents and visitors to Cairo found French and English bookshops, tea rooms and sidewalk cafes, fashionable boutiques, art galleries, and department stores no less grand than Printemps, the Galeries Lafayette or Au Bon Marché in Paris. Legendary hotels were built: Shepheard's, the Savoy, the Semiramis and the Eden Palace. Later, cinemas and roller skating rinks were added for local amusement.

With mechanization in public transport a new electric tram system encouraged the building of suburban residential quarters in the first years of the twentieth century: Garden City along the Nile, Heliopolis to the north of the city, and Maadi near the hot springs resort of Helwan to the south. Developers made Garden City and Maadi into garden suburbs like their fashionable counterparts in Britain. Heliopolis became an eccentric Belgian's Moorish fantasy. Many of the wealthy Egyptian landowners and cotton barons joined the expatriate diplomatic and business elites in the move toward the new suburbs.

In the end, however, British economic exploitation of Egypt nurtured a new nationalistic fervor leading to the dismal and predictable cycles of repression and uprising. With the outbreak of World War II Egypt again devoted resources and facilities to the British army, and unsavory entrepreneurs profited. But when British troops attacked an Egyptian police station in early 1952, hunting for rebels, the colonial relationship between Britain and Egypt finally came to an end. Reports of the attack sparked widespread riots and arson. The elegant districts of modern Cairo looked like a war zone with gutted stores, clubs, and businesses. Six months later, young army officers overthrew King Farouk. Egypt renounced the status quo in its relations with the West and turned elsewhere for support and inspiration.

The builders and their buildings



Downtown Nasriya School (previously the palace of Prince Said Halim). Champollion Street. Built in 1901 by Antonio Lasciac

To many architectural historians, the nineteenth century was a time of retrograde architectural revivalism. Even as the industrial revolution was modernizing Europe, builders stuck to traditional architectural forms, with flamboyant embellishments. To critics, it was a "fancy dress ball," "the bubonic plague of architectural ornamentation," or as an ultimate insult, "cartouche architecture": inflated, unrestrained, extravagant, ostentatious, and tawdry.

It was indeed an exuberant time. The Industrial Revolution created the need for factories, stores, offices, railway stations, and big hotels. It invented new materials to revolutionize construction: iron, steel, improved glass, and then reinforced concrete. Electricity extended the day for both work and pleasure, and made it possible to build tall buildings with lifts. At the same time, industrial wealth also spawned the new bourgeoisie with money to spend on land, houses, and decoration. Last and not unrelated, the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of transcontinental empires.

Imperial rulers wanted to make their capital cities fitting representations of their expanding global power. So entire cities, not just buildings, were transformed. Critics of Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann, and Charles Garnier (the architect of the Paris Opera, which opened in 1875) charged them with squanderous imperial grandiosity, yet their plans and their buildings made Paris one of the most beautiful cities in the world even now, one hundred years later. So too it might be said of Khedive Ismail and Ali Mubarak.

In any case, Paris was the city to be copied in the nineteenth century. In this period, for example, Americans brought back so many architectural ideas from Paris that, it was charged, they might soon be "talking French and shrugging their shoulders" in the streets of New York.

Egypt's ruler had fallen under the same spell.

When Khedive Ismail and his Haussmann, Ali Mubarak, drew up plans for modern Cairo they knew they would have to rely on foreigners to implement their ideas, at least at the beginning. Ismail founded the School of Irrigation and Architecture in Abbasiya, which would eventually become Cairo University's Faculty of Engineering. He reestablished the School of Arts and Crafts in Bulaq for the training of technicians, later to become the Faculty of Engineering at Ain Shams University. But it would take time to produce a new generation of Egyptian architects. Indeed, well into the 1930s many of the architects practicing in Egypt were non-Egyptian. Some had no formal training in architecture; they were simply contractors or artisans in one or other of the building trades. Only after World War II and the establishment of the architectural syndicate was it necessary to have a degree to practice as an architect in Egypt.

Italians played a central role in building the new Cairo. Both professionals and landless laborers were drawn across the Mediterranean to the boom town that Cairo had become. Italian architects and technicians were employed in Egypt's Ministry of Public Works and also in private practice, where they contributed to the design and building of khedival palaces, public buildings, and the private residences of the growing expatriate community and the newly affluent Egyptian landed gentry. Francesco Battigelli, Carlo Prampolini, Pietro Avoscani, Carlo Virgilio Silvagni, Luigi Gavasi, Augusto Cesari, and Giuseppe Garozzo etched their names on Cairo buildings. Avoscani, for instance, built the Cairo Opera House as a copy of La Scala, and, to meet the deadline of the opening of the Suez Canal, completed it in six months; it was, according to reports, "a miracle of activity and audacity." The Sicilian Giuseppe Garozzo and later his sons were involved with many of Cairo's major buildings including the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, the palace at Abdin, the Shepheard's Hotel and the Cairo Fire Brigade Station in Ataba Square.

Many of the buildings designed and constructed by Italians in Cairo in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drew upon the beauty and coherence of Italian Renaissance buildings: ground floors with heavy stone facing or its equivalent in plaster, the upper story with Tuscan columns or Ionic pilasters and pedimented windows. Others, such as Ernesto Verucci Bey and Mario Rossi, used Italian Gothic style, reminiscent of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, in buildings such as Villa Tawfik in Zamalek, now a Helwan University building.

But it is also worth noting that Italians also participated in the renovation of many of the great Islamic monuments of Cairo, and a number used Islamic motifs in their later work. In this sense, the stylistic borrowing was reciprocal. The most famous of this group is Antonio Lasciac, actually from Trieste, who built many of downtown Cairo's most eclectic and beautiful buildings. His early buildings, such as the Suares and the Khedival Buildings of downtown Cairo, follow classical and baroque lines. But his later works, such as the Trieste Insurance Building and Bank Misr, show clear Islamic or neo-Moorish influences. Other Italians, such as Pantanelli and Alfonso Manescolo Bey, followed suit. Still others used Arabesque motifs in furniture building. Giuseppe Parvis, who helped create the Egyptian Pavilion at the 1867 Paris Exposition, and the Furino brothers, operating from a factory in Bulaq, developed a booming business in Arabesque wooden furniture catering to the local and foreign elites. Neo-Islamic themes dominate the architecture of Heliopolis, the early northern suburb planned by Baron Empain and designed by Ernest Jaspar, both Belgian.

The French baroque style, promulgated by the influential Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and applied to many Paris addresses of the nineteenth century, was used with equal panache in apartment buildings in Cairo, particularly in downtown, Garden City, and al-Daher. Delicate balconies with extensive wrought iron work and ornate cantilevers, marble steps and entrances, molded window and door surrounds added the distinctive French touches. A student of Charles Garnier, Ambroise Baudry, practiced in Cairo beginning in 1870. The French architect Georges Parcq built many magnificent buildings in Cairo for more than twenty years beginning just before World War I. Two of his later projects in Giza are now the Mubarak Library and the French Embassy. Other architects from France and elsewhere likewise used the French baroque vocabulary in their buildings, among them Alexan Marcel, Leo Nafiliyan, Raoul Brandon, Antoine Backh, the Austrian Edward Matasek, and the Ottoman Armenian Garo Balian.

By the 1920s art deco and expressionist buildings appeared on the streets, designed by Egyptian and expatriate architects. Their names include Fahmi Riad, Edouard Luledjian, Nubar Kevorkian, Giuseppe Mazza, and Galligopoulo. Three Frenchmen, Leon Azema, Max Edrei, and Jacques Hardy, who were classmates at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, also contributed to this modern building vocabulary in Egypt. Some superb examples of the art deco style exist in Cairo, with dramatic beadwork around windows and angular forms defining cornices and balconies. By the 1930s, an eclectic fashion incorporated sphinxes, scarabs, cobras, and other pharaonic motifs.

As one moves away from the large buildings of

downtown to the palaces and villas in outlying neighborhoods, the ornamentation becomes even more eclectic. These were the houses of the arrivistes of the early twentieth century, who used their residences to display their wealth. The Sakakini Palace in al-Daher offers a perfect example of this immoderate opulence. One imagines them poring over architectural pattern books like carpet samples as they decided on the embellishments—a medallion here, a garland there, a cornucopia, a statue, a pillar, a balustrade—sometimes in a riot of combinations. There was no worrying about finer details of coherence or taste. The European parallels to these unique creations were probably the ones that riled architectural historians and aesthetic purists.

Embellishments were especially easy to add in Cairo, being made largely of hollow plaster of Paris, an innovation brought to Cairo by Italians. In less hospitable climates of northern Europe, architectural ornamentation is usually an integral part of the building, that is, part of the stone masonry or terra-cotta structure. Hollow plaster casts allowed architects and their clientele in Cairo to reproduce decorations cheaply and liberally, quite literally gluing them to the facade of a building. It seemed like a good idea at the time: the dry, warm climate of Egypt accommodated the plaster decoration for several decades, but their deterioration is now sadly evident, and the photographs in the last section of the book offer some examples.

I hope the photographs that follow will spark an interest in preserving this captivating layer of Cairo's historical past. Let the reader simply look up, above Cairo's congestion, to see the striking buildings and the splendid decorations that are also Cairo.



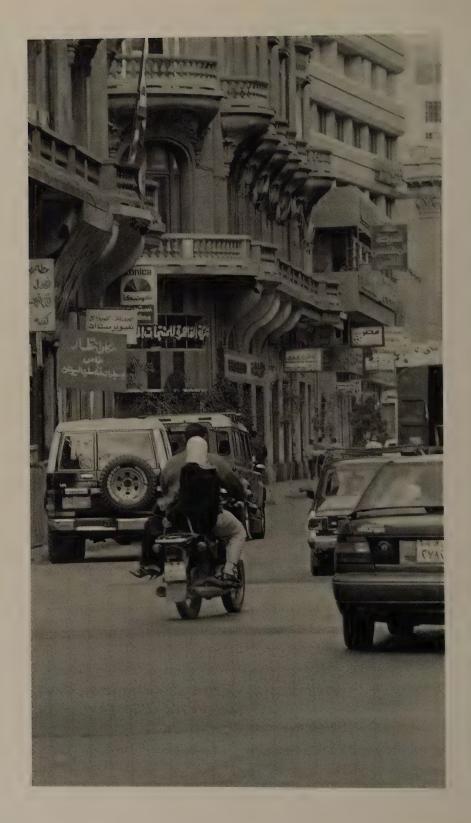




Downtown Midan al-Ataba al-Khadra. Parliament Hotel and shopping arcades. Built from 1895

Downtown Imad al-Din Street at Suliman al-Halabi

PREVIOUS PAGE Downtown Midan Falaki, in front of Bab al-Luq market.







Downtown Imad al-Din Street from Midan Mustafa Kamil (previously Rondpoint Suares)

Downtown Talaat Harb (previously Suliman Pasha Street) at 26th of July (previously Fuad Street and Bulaq Street). Architect: V. Erlanger







Downtown Khedival Buildings from Imad al-Din Street. This magnificent commercial and residential complex, the first of its scale and luxury in modern Cairo, was designed and built in a collaboration between Gustave Brocher, Antonio Lasciac, and Georges Parcq. 1911

PREVIOUS PAGE *Downtown* Midan Tahrir. The Egyptian Antiquities Museum. Designed by Marcel Dourgnon and built by Giuseppe Garozzo. Opened in 1902







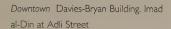




Downtown Khedival Buildings



Downtown Midan Mustafa Kamil (previously Rondpoint Suares) looking up Muhammad Farid/Imad al-Din Street. At back right: Davies-Bryan Building (formerly Welsh Stores, also Shurbagi Building), built in 1911 by Robert Williams. Mid-right: Egyptian International Bank (formerly Credit Foncier Egyptien), built about 1880. Front right: Suares Building (also called the Risotto Club), built in 1897 by Antonio Lasciac

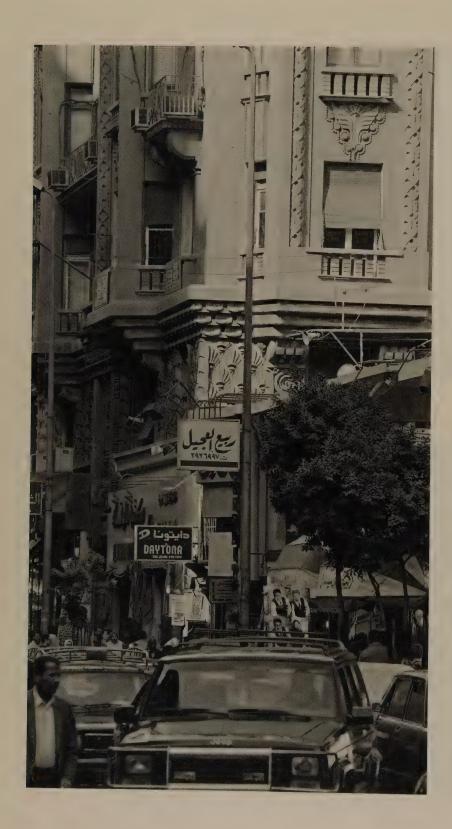






Downtown Davies-Bryan Building









Downtown 41 Sharif Street







Downtown Muhammad Shawarbi Pasha Building. Ramsis at 26th of July Street. Built in 1925, attributed to the architect Habib Ayrout







RIGHT *Downtown* Imad al-Din at al-Alfi Street. Ades Building

LEFT ABOVE *Downtown* Midan al-Ataba.

Cairo Fire Brigade Station. Built by G. Garozzo and Sons, about 1906

LEFT BELOW *Downtown* Midan Khazindar. Eden Palace Hotel. Built possibly as early as 1870

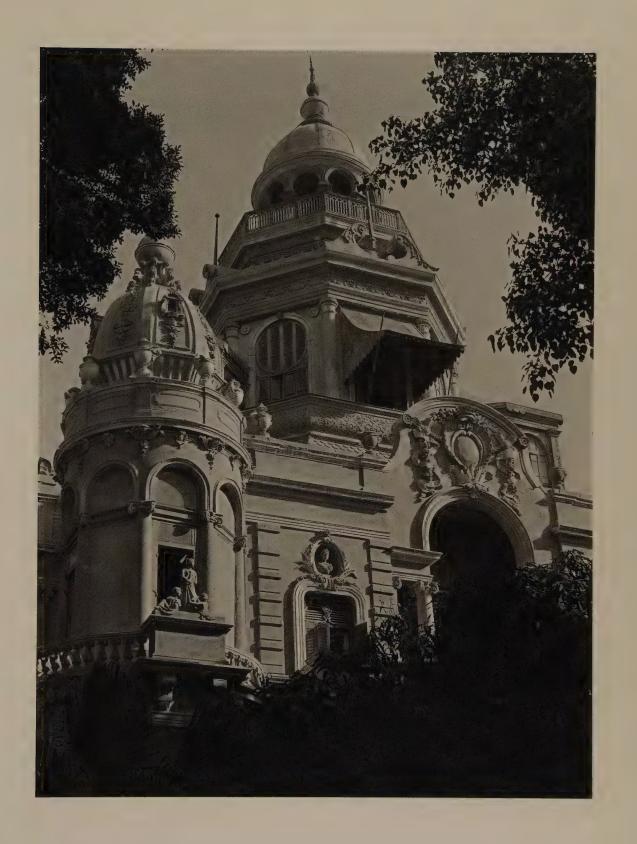






ol-Daher Midan Sakakini. Sakakini Palace. Built in 1897 for the wealthy Lebanese businessman Habib Sakakini. The historian Albert Hourani states that this house became the focal point for a new district in the northward extension of the city, and soon other great merchant families of Beirut, such as the Sursuq, Trad, and Bustrus, were living nearby

PREVIOUS PAGE Heliopolis 26 Cleopatra Street







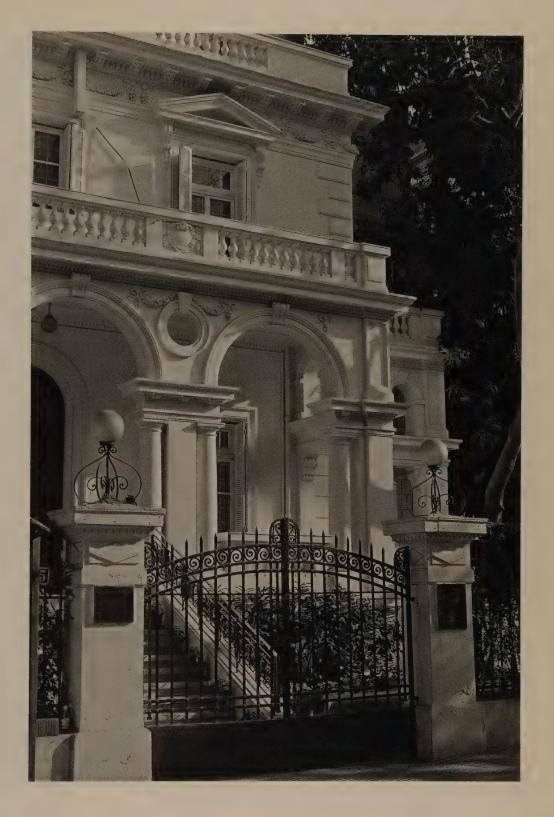
al-Daher Sakakini Palace





Garden City 9 Tulumbat Street.(also called Ittihad al-Muhamiyin al-Arab). The villa was built for Abicaroun Alexane Pasha





Zamalek 5 al-Kamil Muhammad Street. Residence of the Canadian Ambassador (the home of Queen Farida from 1947 to 1949 after her divorce from King Farouk)



Zamalek 16 Hasan Sabri Street. Gaston Zananiri architect and original owner

Downtown 11 Champollion Street. Nasriya School



Garden City Midan Qasr al-Dubara (now Midan Simon Bolivar). Villa Casdagli. Built in the early 1900s by Edward Matasek for the Levantine businessman Emanual Casdagli. Casdagli had business ties to the textile industry of Manchester. The villa housed the American Embassy prior to World War II. Now it is a school





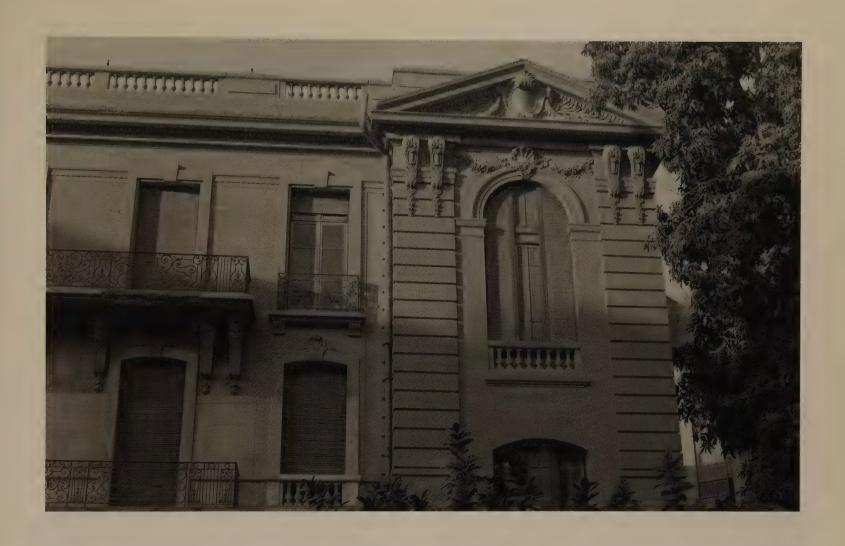




Garden City Gamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin at Ahmad Pasha Street



Garden City Gamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin at al-Saraya al-Kubra Street



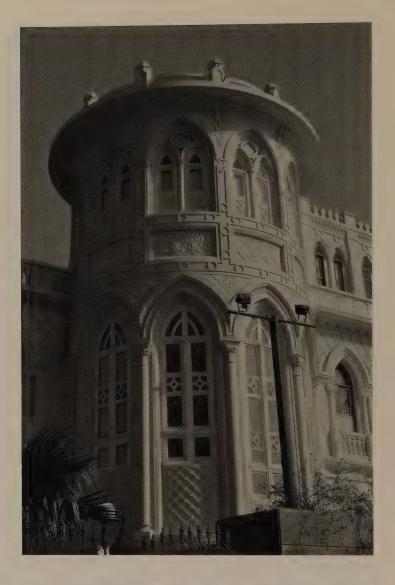




Gorden City Gamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin at Ahmad Pasha Street



Zamalek Shagarat al-Durr Street. Villa Tawfiq (now Helwan University Faculty of Music). Designed by Mario Rossi and Ernesto Verucci Bey



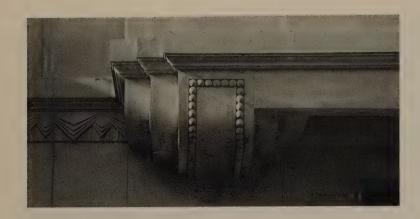
Zamalek Muhammad Mazhar Street. Greater Cairo Library. Built for the wife and children of Musa Yaqub Cattaui, head of an influential Egyptian Jewish family. Edmond Jabes, the French writer, married Musa's granddaughter Arlette in the house



Abbasiya Sabil al-Khazindar, near Midan al-Gaysh

Heliopolis 31 Beirut Street. Architect: Antoine Backh





Garden City 8 Tulumbat Street



Garden City 10 Birgas Street



Zamalek 5 Muhammad Thaqib Street

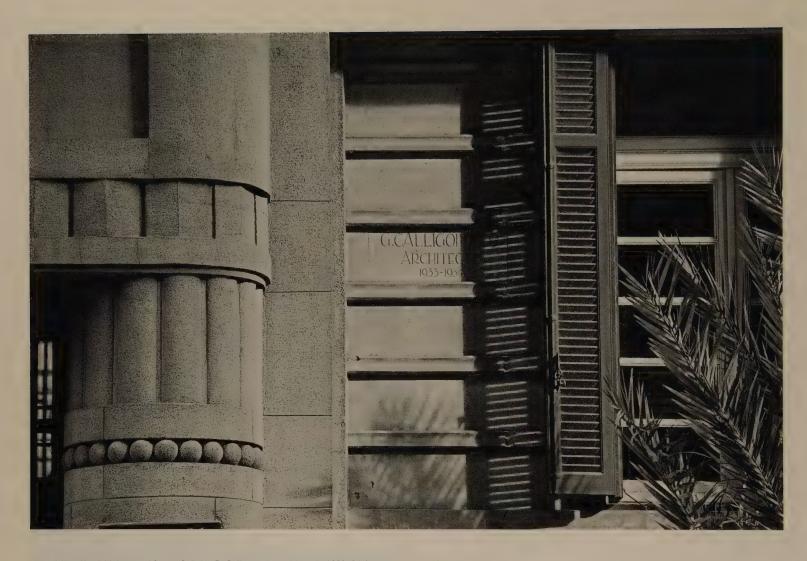




Zamalek 5 Muhammad Thaqib Street



Heliopolis 19 al-Shaykh al-Disuqi



Zamalek al-Kamil Muhammad Street. Built by G. Galligopoulo, architect, in 1933–34 for the Avramoussis, a Maltese family



Downtown Muhammad Farid and Bank Misr streets





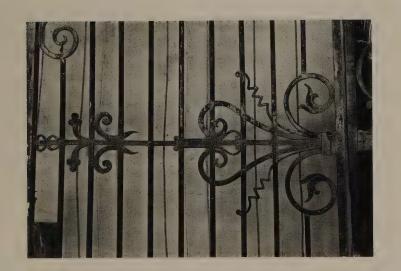


Garden City Nabatat Street at Ahmad Pasha. Currently the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, During World War I was occupied by the commander of the British Army.

Rented after World War II by Mustafa al-Nahhas, leader of the Wafd Party



Muniro 18 Ismail Pasha Sirri Street



al-Daher Sakakini Palace

PREVIOUS PAGE Garden City. 8 Tulumbat Street.



Garden City Nabatat Street

RIGHT Garden City Kamal al-Din Husayn Street, off Midan Qasr al-Dubara







Zamalek Muhammad Mazhar Street. Greater Cairo Library



Munira Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, off al-Munira Street (also called Yusif Street)



Zamalek 24 Saray al-Gazira



Abbasiya 20 Misr wa-l-Sudan Street

RIGHT ABOVE Downtown Midan al-Ataba. Main post office

FAR RIGHT ABOVE Downtown Groppi café and patisserie. Midan Talaat Harb

RIGHT BELOW Zamdlek 24 Saray al-Gazira

FAR RIGHT BELOW Downtown 26th of July between Ramsis and Talaat Harb streets

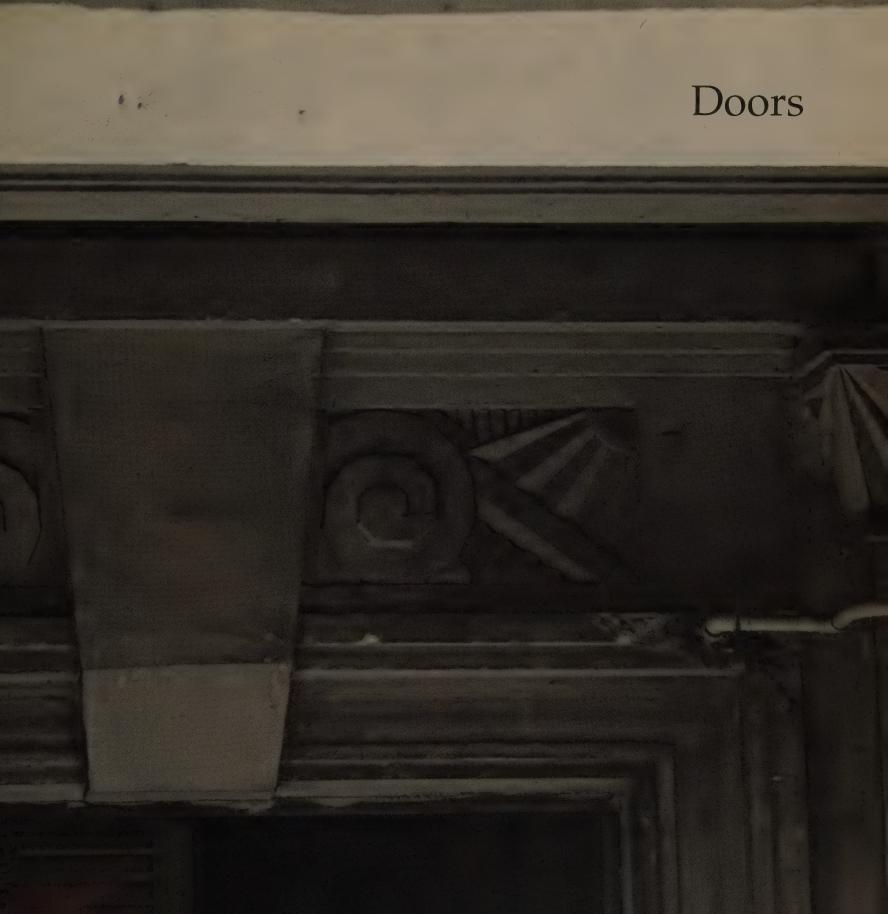














Garden City 10 Tulumbat Street. Original owner: Umar Simi. During World War II this building housed the offices of Oliver Lyttelton, British Minister of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, and was referred to as "Number 10" and "Gray Pillars"

PREVIOUS PAGE Zamalek 5 Muhammad Thaqib Street



Zamalek 3 Muhammad Mazhar Street



Bulaq Madinat Abbas Street



Zamalek 5 Dr. Mahmud Azmi Street



Downtown 5 Sikkat al-Fadl Street



al-Daher 15 Kamil Sidqi Street (also al-Faggala Street)



Bulaq 42 al-Sultan Abu al-Ila Street



Gorden City 3 Midan Gamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin



Garden City 3 Saray al-Kubra Street



Zamalek 11 al-Kamil Muhammad Street. Architect: Guido Gavasi. Aaron Alexander, a lawyer for several British companies in Egypt, owned a flat in this building, in which Abba Eban lived for a time during the 1940s



Downtown 149 Muhammad Farid Street



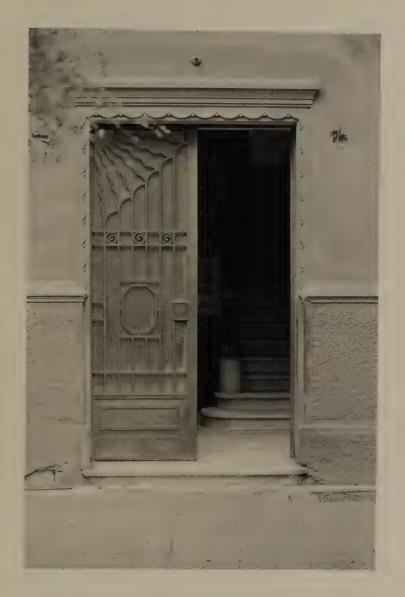
al-Daher Bishara al-Kafuri Street, off Sayf al-Din al-Mahrani



Heliopolis 3 Rushdi Street



Munira Dar al-Ulum Street

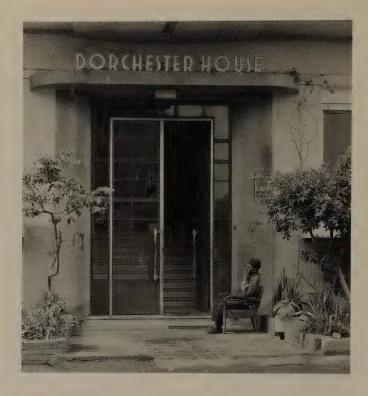


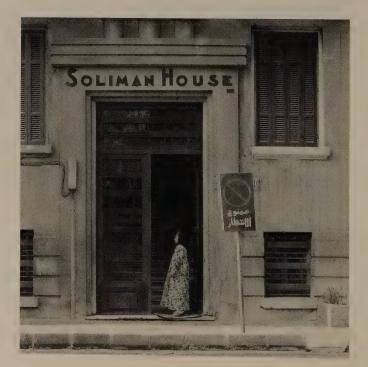
Heliopolis 12 Rushdi Street



Heliopolis 19 al-Shaykh al-Disuqi Street









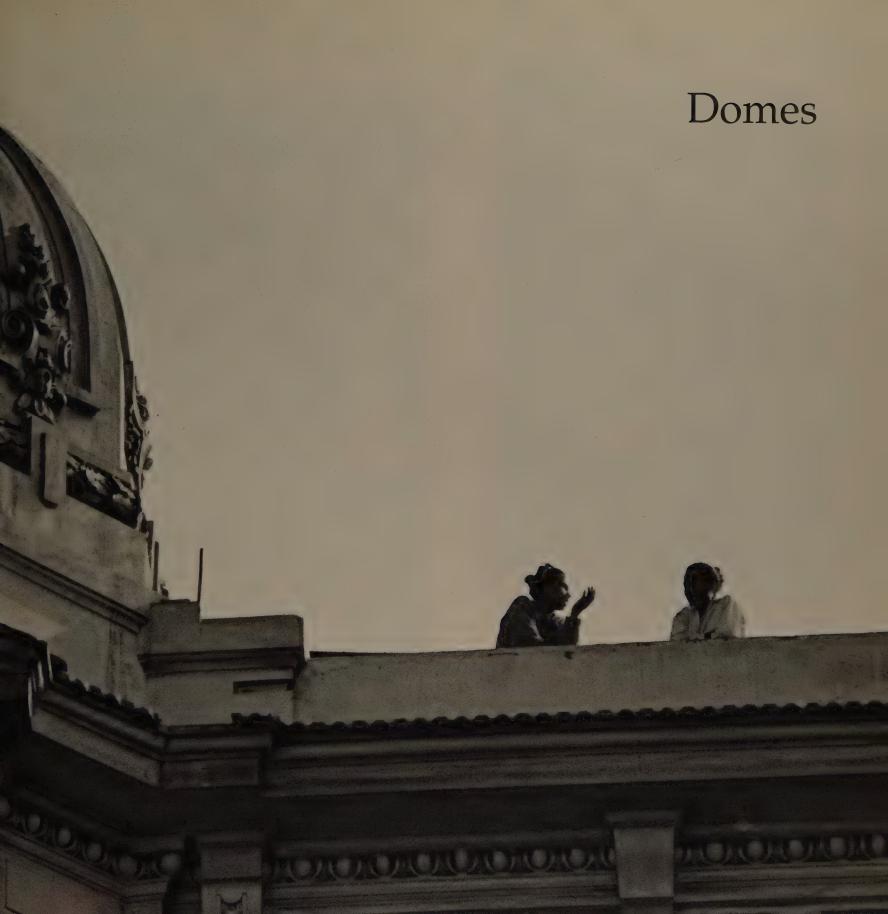
Garden City 18 Dar al-Shifa (also Balti) Street. Built by Nubar Kevorkian in 1930

Gorden City 5 Ibrahim Nagib Pasha Street

LEFT Zamalek Saray al-Gazira Street









Downtown Sednaoui Department Store, Midan Khazindar, Built in 1913 by architect Georges Parcq. Modeled after Magasins Printemps in Paris. Owned by Salim and Samaan Sednaoui, Lebanese brothers. The Cairo Bourse was next door, with the Eden Palace and Bristol hotels on the Midan

Downtown Hotel National. Corner of Talaat Harb and Abd al-Khaliq Sarwat streets. The 1908 Baedeker's Egypt describes the National as one of Cairo's leading hotels, having "350 rooms, elevator, steam-heating, and pension ca. 50 piastres"

PREVIOUS PAGE *Downtown* Corner of 26th of July (previously Bulaq) and Talaat Harb (previously Suliman Pasha) streets. Architect. V. Erlanger. Currently houses Claridge Hotel







Egyptian Diplomatic Club (previously the Muhammad Ali Club). Talaat Harb Street. First two floors built about 1910 by Alexan Marcel; his son-in-law added the top floors

RIGHT Downtown al-Qadi al-Fadil Street







Downtown Tiring Department Store. Midan Ataba. Built in 1913 by Oscar Horowitz



Downtown Omar Effendi Department Store (formerly Orosdi Back and Co.). Corner of Rushdi Pasha and Abd al-Aziz streets. Architect: Raoul Brandon. 1909







LEFT al-Daher 275 Ramsis Street

RIGHT Gorden City 18 al-Saraya al-Kubra.
Built in 1925 by Georges Parcq
FAR RIGHT ABOVE Downtown
Manshiya al-Mahrani, off Yusif al-Gindi
Street

FAR RIGHT BELOW Garden City

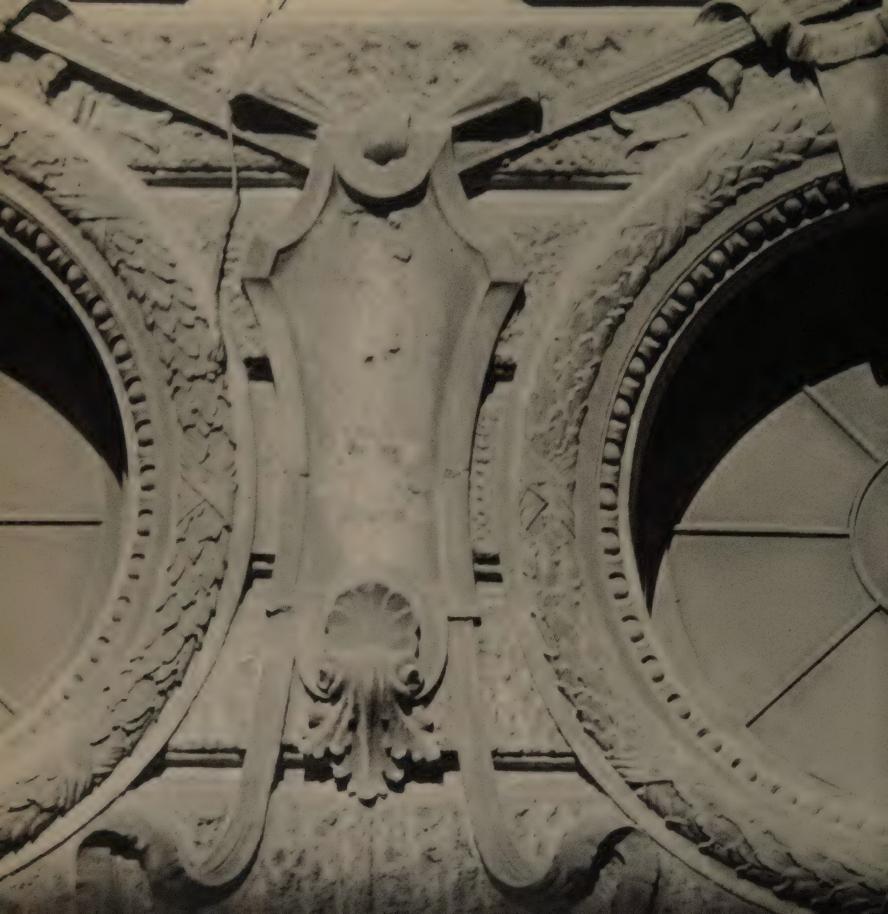
Corner of Aisha Taymuriya (previously alWalda Pasha) and Gandhi streets. Built by
Georges Parcq in 1914

PREVIOUS PAGE *Downtown* al-Gumhuriya (previously Abdin) Street at Qasr al-Nil, Near Midan al-Opera















Downtown Qasr al-Nil at al-Gumhuriya Street

Downtown Egyptian Diplomatic Club, Talaat Harb Street

RIGHT *Downtown* New Hotel. 21 Adli Street. Built between 1894 and 1906, probably as an apartment building by the Suares brothers. Designed possibly by Ambroise Baudry

FAR RIGHT ABOVE *Munira* Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale. al-Munira (also Yusif) Street. The architect Garo Balian led one of the many renovations of the palace

FAR RIGHT BELOW *Downtown* 50 Qasr al-Nil Street, Between Midan Mustafa Kamil and Midan al-Opera

PREVIOUS PAGE Downtown Magasins Gattegno. 13 Adli Street











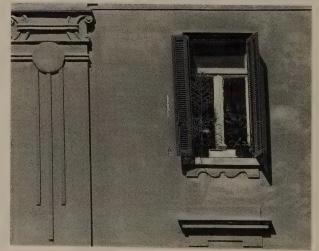


LEFT ABOVE Downtown Café Riche building, Talaat Harb Street

LEFT BELOW Bulaq Sikkat al-Nasr, off 26th of July Street

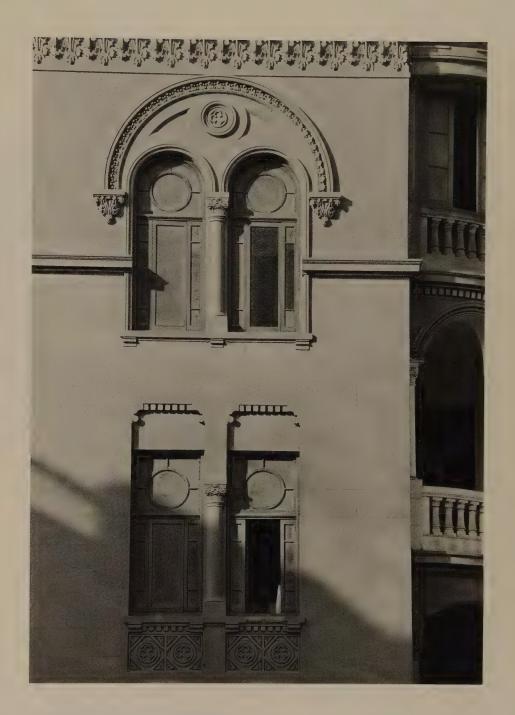
RIGHT ABOVE Downtown al-Ilwi Street

RIGHT BELOW Downtown al-llwi Street









Garden City Midan Gamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin

LEFT ABOVE Downtown 27 Huda Shaarawi Street

LEFT BELOW al-Daher Waqf al-Kharbutli, off al-Daher Street





Zamalek Gazira House. 4 Imarat al-Yaman. Attributed to Ernest Jaspar



Downtown Clot Bey Street

Downtown Clot Bey Street (also called Khulud). Named after the founder of Egypt's first medical school, Dr. Antoine Clot, the street, which was built in about the 1870s, is one of 'modern' Cairo's oldest. It runs between the Cairo Railway Station at Bab al-Hadid (which the French called Gare Pont Limoun) and Midan Khazindar

















LEFT ABOVE Downtown Egyptian Diplomatic Club, Talaat Harb Street

LEFT CENTER Downtown 9 Zaki Street

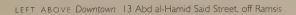
LEFT BELOW Downtown Corner of Talaat Harb (formerly Suliman Pasha) and al-Busta al-Gadida streets

RIGHT ABOVE Garden City Villa Casdagli. Midan Qasr al-Dubara

PREVIOUS PAGE Garden City Sirag al-Din Palace. Corner of Nabatat and Ahmad Pasha streets







LEFT BELOW Downtown 5 Suq Tawfiqiya

RIGHT ABOVE Downtown Abd al-Khaliq Sarwat Street

RIGHT CENTER Downtown Comer of al-Shaykh Rihan and Yusif al-Gindi

RIGHT BELOW Downtown Corner of Nagib al-Rihani and Imad al-Din streets











Downtown Midan Tahrir



Garden City Latin America Street at Rustum Pasha

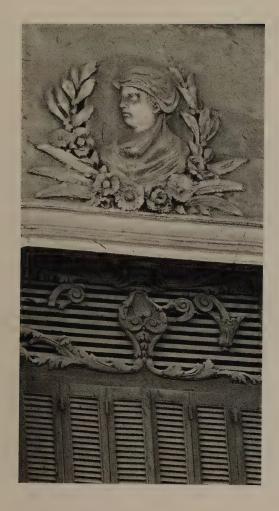








Bab al-Khalq Ahmad Umar Street



al-Daher Sakakini Palace

Downtown 16 Bustan Street





Downtown 13 Abd al-Hamid Said Street, off Ramsis

al-Daher al-Daher Street





LEFT PAGE

Downtown Italia-Adriatica Insurance Company, Sharif Street at Muhammad Mazlum Pasha

RIGHT PAGE

LEFT ABOVE *Downtown* Comer of al-Shaykh Rihan and Yusif al-Gindi streets
LEFT CENTER *al-Daher* Sakakini Palace. Inscription below the lion reads "Habib
Sakakini 1897"

LEFT BELOW Gorden City Sirag al-Din Palace. Comer of Nabatat and Ahmad Pasha streets

RIGHT ABOVE Downtown Omar Effendi. Corner of Abd al-Aziz and Rushdi Pasha streets

RIGHT BELOW Downtown 14 Adli Street .

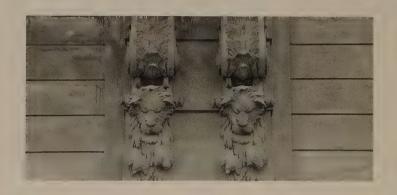














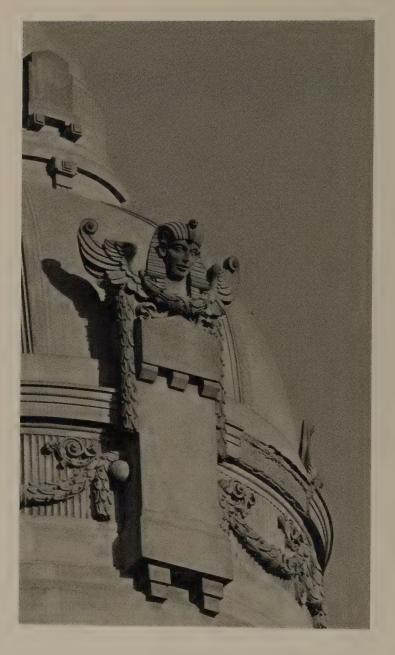
LEFT Downtown 9 Zaki Street

RIGHT Garden City Sirag al-Din Palace. Nabatat Street at Ahmad Pasha.





Downtown Midan Urabi



Downtown Muhammad Shawarbi Pasha Building. Ramsis at 26th of July Street. Built in 1925, attributed to the architect Habib Ayrout



Downtown Club des Princes (also called Club des Quarantes). Comer of Imad al-Din and Nagib al-Rihani streets. First constructed in 1897. Antonio Lasciac designed and built the top floor in 1907







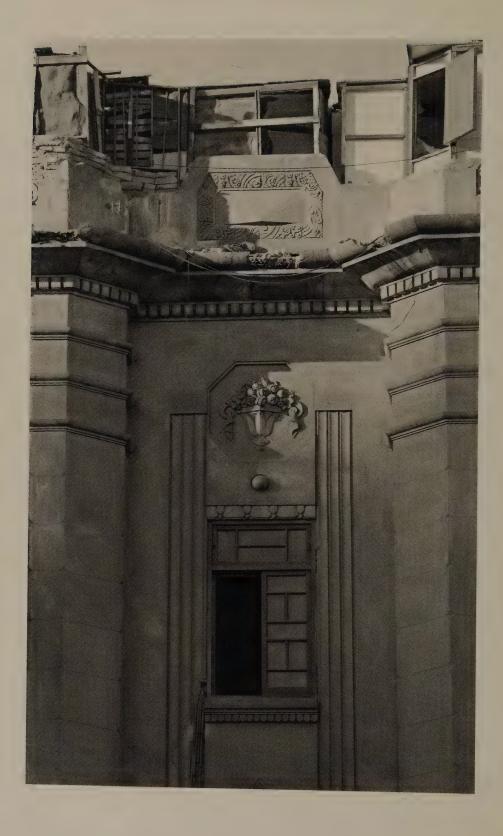


Downtown Midan Mustafa Kamil. Example of hollow plaster facade, now crumbling

Garden City 5 Ahmad Pasha Street. Example of hollow plaster bracket in disrepair

Garden City 7 Birgas Street. Example of informal building on roof

PREVIOUS PAGE Garden City British Embassy and other buildings behind it along Latin America Street, from the Nile



Envoi

Every time a building is knocked down a part of Cairo's history is lost forever.

Professor Salah Zaki, as quoted in al-Ahram Weekly April 4-10, 1996

Many of Cairo's buildings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are in a parlous state. Cabinet decrees preventing the demolition of buildings of architectural value seem to halt neither their decay nor their destruction. The force of economics favors their demise. The cruel reality is that the Cairo of Khedive Ismail and Ali Mubarak, meant to introduce order, health, and airiness to the city, is succumbing to the same modern forces imposing decay all over our careless world.

Yet at the brink of their obliteration, new interest is being taken in Cairo's turn-of-the-century buildings. Until recently they were architectural orphans, visual reminders of Egypt's subjugated past. Now Egyptian intellectuals and political leaders are questioning that neglect and reexamining the value of the 'cosmopolitan era.' As Cairo becomes more and more a concrete hotchpotch like other world cities, a clear nostalgia is emerging for Cairo of the Belle Epoque.

In early 1997 the Mubarak Library, al-Ahram Weekly, and the Fulbright Commission initiated a national campaign to halt the destruction of Cairo's modern architectural heritage. First Lady Madame Suzanne Mubarak heads this campaign, which aims to create public awareness, compile a national register of important buildings, and plan for their preservation, restoration, and reutilization. A non-governmental organization, the Society for the Preservation of the Architectural Heritage of Cairo, is also active.

It is too early to know how successful these preservation efforts will be. One cannot help, however, being caught up in the enthusiasm for recapturing this small part of Egypt's long history and feeling hopeful that that reevaluation will lead to a more nuanced view of Cairo's rich material heritage. Fin-de-siècle Cairo was truly part of many overlapping worlds. Indeed, in its global significance and cosmopolitan sophistication, Cairo was not merely a copy of Paris; it was *more* than Paris.



Downtown Midan Mustafa Kamil

FOLLOWING PAGE *Downtown* Midan Talaat Harb. Baehler Building, Built in 1934 by the architect Leo Nafiliyan on the site of the Savoy Hotel





Recommended reading

ON THE HISTORY OF EGYPT AND CAIRO

Abu Lughod, Janet (1971). *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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Downtown Midan al-Gumhuriya. Opposite Abdin Palace

ON BUILDING, BUILDERS,

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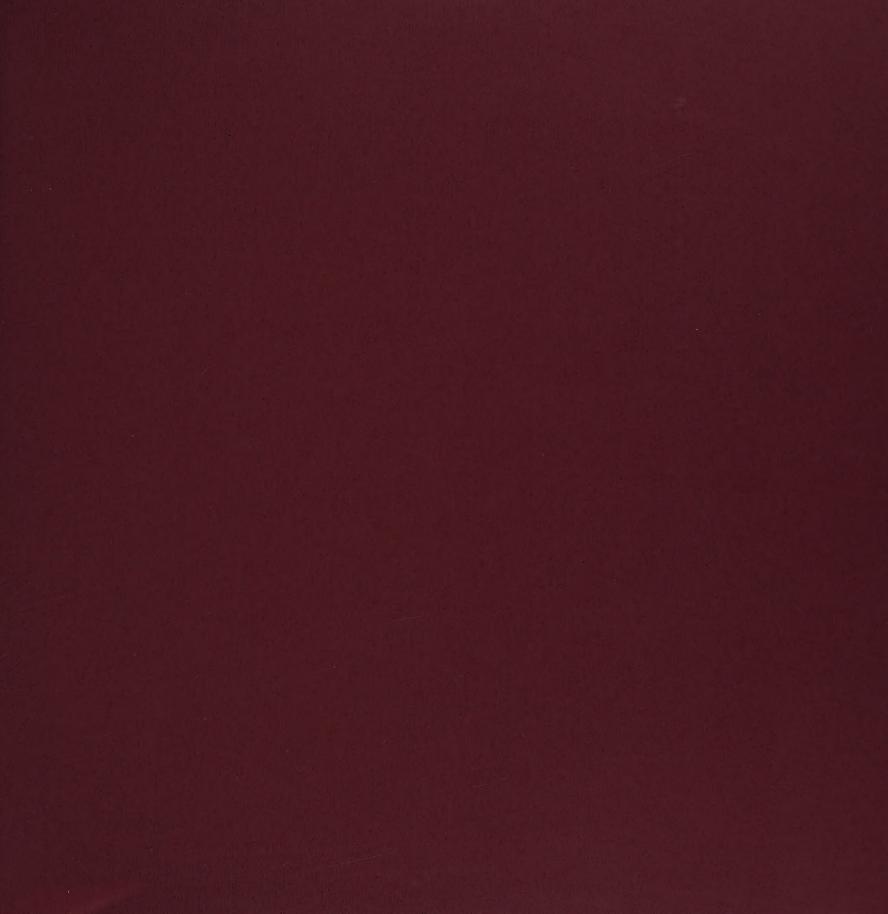
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Volait, Mercedes (1987). "La Communauté Italienne et ses Ediles," in *Alexandrie entres Deux Mondes*. Aix-en-Provence: Edisud.

Volait, Mercedes (1987). L'Architecture Moderne en Egypte et la Revue: al-'Imara 1939–1959. Dossier (4). Cairo: CEDEJ.

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Volait, Mercedes (1998). *Ambroise Baudry: l'Egypte d'un Architecte*. Paris: Gallimard.





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